

System Outlook

The EWR area will contend with special operations this morning, adding complexity to already complex airspace. FLL volume and low ceilings could require a GAAP program. Thunderstorms in the DFW area this morning may result in delays. A ground delay program is probable for SFO because of low ceilings.

Aviation News Highlights

FAA Eyes Rise In Errors-Newsday reports the FAA sent in a special team of air traffic control experts this week to investigate the rising number of reported mistakes at NY TRACON. Reported mistakes by controllers have been skyrocketing at the facility, the spike coinciding with an FAA policy that took effect in January, cracking down on overtime. The air traffic control union says the errors are the result of a staff shortage. FAA spokesman Greg Martin said, "We maintain the highest level of safety for New York skies and we're making sure the TRACON continues to operate that way." Martin said the team will be on site for at least two weeks and will evaluate the facility from top to bottom, looking at everything from the number of planes in the sky to how long controllers spend on break. "It's all encompassing," Martin said. The team will also look at some "serious allegations of leave abuse and overtime abuse," he said. Union leaders said the allegations are groundless. There have been 28 operational errors this year, compared with 24 all of last year. Five have already been reported this week, including two on Monday. These occurred at the beginning of the shift when ten controllers were on duty instead of 12, according to the union. He said the managers refused to call anyone in on overtime. Martin said the team will vigorously investigate each error. "The intent is to get a clear, accurate picture of the TRACON that is supported by facts and not a breathless exchange of charges," he said.

Blakey Kids Fossett About Pilot Rest Regulations-FAA Administrator Marion Blakey congratulated Steve Fossett on his record breaking solo flight via cell phone. She joked that Fossett should get some rest because the 67-hour flight violated the agency's pilot duty-and rest-time regulations..

FAA Shuts Down Carrier Involved in Teterboro Crash-The New York Times reports the FAA has ordered a Florida charter company to cease operations after discovering that it did not have license to provide the crew and airplane that went off the end of a runway at Teterboro, crossing a highway and smashing into a warehouse, injuring 20 last month. Lack of a license doesn't show the cause of the crash, but does show that no one was responsible for making sure the pilots were licensed, trained, tested for drugs and alcohol, and equipped with the proper manuals. The FAA issued the "cease and desist" order against Platinum Jet Management of Fort Lauderdale. Platinum refused to turn over records subpoenaed by the FAA.

British Airways Again Flies on Three Engines-The Wall Street Journal reports that the same 747 that flew from LA to England on only three engines had a repeat performance on its next trip. It lost the same engine en route from Singapore to London, but the crew continued, flying 11 hours with a dead engine. The engine went dead 3.5 hours after takeoff, but continued after the crew conferred with the airline's operations center in London.

Want to read the full story? Go to http://employees.faa.gov/news/daily_media

Operation Metrics

System	Actuals Oct 1 - Mar 3	Performance Limit Oct 1 - Mar 3	Change	Performance Oct 1 - Mar 3	Actuals Mar 3
Runway Incursions*	12	15	(3)	☑	0
Operational Errors*	237	230	7	☒	3

* Category A & B

	Actuals Oct 1 - Mar 3	Minimum Performance Goal	Change	Performance Oct 1 - Mar 3	Actuals Mar 3	Performance Mar 3
OEP 35 Airports						
Airport Average Daily Capacity	100012	99892	120	☑	100898	☑
System Airport Efficiency Rate	95.54%	95.66%	(0.12)	☒	97.66%	☑

Source: Aviation System Performance Metrics

- ☑ Meets or exceeds performance
☒ Below expected performance

Operational Update

The good news is that it's Friday for the S/S bunch (of which we are members) and the bad news is that there really isn't any bad news. Maybe that's overly optimistic but it is Friday you know! And now, the news.

Yesterday was a windy, busy day but the weather didn't curtail operations to any great degree. Snowbird activity impacted ZDC, as did a stuck mic in Sector 9, which caused a 9-minute ground stop for J75/48 traffic. Center operations were at 105% of '04 numbers and the 45 select airports were at 103.77. System-wide delays were 733. LGA led with 205 and a distance-based 1,400-mile, 12-hour ground delay program with three adjustments. LGA gave some hard work-type numbers for the 15-1700 hours for departures. They launched 40, 40 and 42 for those three hours. The only other GDP was for EWR that had the same wind and distance-based 1,400-mile program. EWR held off until 2100Z and had two departure delay periods of +15, one of which was a result of a bird strike and the restrictions ZDC needed for their stuck mic. EWR ended the day with 191 delays. PHX had 77 delays because of volume and noise abatement. FLL didn't need a program but had 71 delays for volume and arrival demand that was handled by MIT. Tech Ops will have ten aircraft flying about smartly in the NAS checking 71 facilities and procedures today.

We had no fatal accidents or ODs reported yesterday. There were 11 preliminary OEs; one NMAC; ten pilot deviations, and no laser incidents. Just for educational purposes, the pilot deviations ranged from crossing a hold line/runway without clearance, entering restricted airspace, entering Class B without clearance, climbing/descending from assigned altitudes, to landing on the wrong runway. You just can't leave them alone for a second!

As most of us know by now, Pilot Steve Fossett landed yesterday in Salina, Kansas in his Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer, where the flight originated this past Monday. Fossett established a world-record for a non-stop, unrefuelled, solo flight around the world. The flight's duration was just over 67 hours and he traveled 23,000 miles. The other side of the story was that Fossett's concern over the Pacific wasn't really for fuel as the media reported, but the possibility of the Command Center issuing a GDP for Salina! Actually, besides the controllers who accommodated the flight, the Command Center played a role in the planning and coordination of the trip, working with the flyer's command post. A report on FAA's role in Fossett's record breaking event is on ATO Online.

The weekend weather promises not to be bad, but not great. Some rain is expected in South Florida, snow showers in the DC area, and those lousy low ceilings just about everywhere else.

Questions or comments? Send mail to 9-awa-ato-online@faa.gov